

**ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION**

**SHREWSBURY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (No 250) 2019 NEWSLETTER**

*Dear Member*

1. As always, as well as providing the opportunity for fellowship and comradeship at our monthly meetings, your Branch has been involved in a wide range of activities around the area showing the flag, raising money for welfare needs and recruiting new members. Thank you to all those members who have attended meetings and assisted in our endeavours. Sadly however I must report that we lost quite a few members through 2019; in particular two of our Life Vice Presidents passed away, Brian Beattie early in the year and Jim Penny more recently. We also lost Roy Dolton, for a long time an active member of the Branch Committee and part of our successful Wings collecting team. We remember with fondness and gratitude all those who have taken their final posting during the year.

2. 2019 saw some major changes in the way that your Association is organized and I expect that you have been following developments in the articles in Air Mail and the Area Newsletter. Our long term Area Director based in Exeter, Paul Baker, has moved on within the Association to start up the Clubs Division, and so we are now looked after by Ailsa Gough from HQ. The Association Welfare team has been re-organised and Richard Peck Hotel closed. There have also been some heated debate over whether the Association should move to One Charity and maybe bring in a One Member One Vote process; so much is happening in the wider Association and your Committee has made inputs to the debates. Your Branch was also represented at National and Area Conferences where we took the opportunity to engage in the discussions; and, of course, Shawn Marston our outstanding Standard Bearer continued to impress as the Association's National Standard Bearer.

3. Closer to home we once again participated in the Mayor's Service, the Area Battle of Britain Parade and Service at RAF Cosford, the Battle of Britain service in Shrewsbury and the annual Shrewsbury Remembrance Service. Our Branch Secretary also had the honour of laying the Association's wreath at the Cenotaph in London this year. Members were also in evidence at the Shrewsbury Flower Show where we raised funds and recruited new members, at the Armed Forces Covenant Event at Shrewsbury Town Football Club, the Veterans Afternoon Tea at RAF Shawbury, the RAF Shawbury Annual Reception, and a Commemorative Event held at the RAF Shawbury Church. We also had a splendid turn out by members and 1119 Sqn RAFAC cadets at our annual event in Shrewsbury Cemetery to mark the formation of the RAF and to honour the fallen. In addition we were privileged to be involved in a couple of funerals for RAF veterans who had passed away locally with no known family. All of that in addition to our monthly meetings which is always a great way to spend an hour or two with some fantastic people and I do hope that if you have not dropped by recently that we will see you during 2020.

**FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

4. The Chairman writes:

*With my involvement with RAFA, other organisations and grandchildren it hardly seems more than a few weeks since I sat down to type my last Christmas Message, I now do firmly believe those who told me that when I settled into retirement I would wonder how I ever found time to go to work!*



*I am pleased to be able to report that our happy band continues to maintain strong numbers at our monthly meetings. Our excellent Secretary has recently had to replace our attendance book which had become full (being an ex Admin officer he could not resist doing an analysis of the figures) and tells me that the average number of members who attend meetings has grown year on year for the past five years. I hope that means that those who do attend enjoy the meetings and the opportunity to mix with others from the Branch. I am aware that many of you find it difficult to actually get to Harlescott Social Club but if you are ever able to join us we would be delighted to see you. For those who cannot make the meetings you remain valued members of our Branch and the Association and if we can ever be of assistance please do get in touch with us.*

*After the activity of last year, where we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force, 2019 has been somewhat quieter although we have still had a full programme of activities and our Branch has been represented at both Area and National Conferences. As a Branch we are also represented at many major events as Shawn Marston retained his role as National Standard Bearer, well done Shawn. I am also grateful to Eric Blackie who carries our Branch Standard when Eric is unavailable.*

*Comradeship and support remain the main tenants your Committee tries to promote. They all work hard on your behalf with some wearing two hats. I am very grateful to them for their support and time as the Branch would not be able to run without their efforts. We are also fortunate to continue to benefit from strong support from RAF Shawbury and in particular our RAFALOs. Our longstanding lead RAFALO, Sqn Ldr Garry James, is a regular attendee at most of our meetings and joins us when we are out and about.*

*Sadly, it has been another year where we have lost some old friends who will be missed but we have gained some new members who support our meetings and to you I say welcome and I hope that you enjoy your time with us.*

*Finally, I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.*

*Paul Sharp*

#### **DETAILS OF YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE**

5. Present Committee members are as follows:
  - a. President  
Air Commodore (Ret'd) John J Burke BSc CEng DipEL FIET
  - b. Chairman  
Paul Sharp
  - c. Vice Chairman  
John Tisbury MBE
  - d. Secretary  
John Tisbury MBE (Phone 01952 201902)
  - e. Treasurer  
Pam Small
  - f. Welfare Officer  
Paul Martin
  - g. Assistant Welfare Officer  
Iain Davison
  - h. Membership Secretary  
Paul Martin
  - i. Wings Appeal Organiser  
Paul Sharp

- j Social Secretary  
Mike Bradbury
- k. ATC Liaison Officer  
Mike Bradbury
- l. Web Master  
Mike Farmer

RAF Shawbury RAFA Liaison Officer – Squadron Leader Gary James

The Branch Standard Bearer is Shawn Marston and his deputy is Eric Blackie.

- 6. The Branch also benefits from the wisdom of our Life Vice Presidents, Mr Roger Fylde and Ms Rose Davies.
- 7. Please contact any of the above if you have any questions or concerns about the Association or your Branch.

### **DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

- 8. The following events are programmed:

2020	<b>6 January</b>	- <b>The Work of RSPCA Gonsal Farm – Kate Clement</b>
	<b>3 February</b>	- <b>Armed Forces Outreach – Sara Kerr</b>
	<b>2 March</b>	- <b>Branch AGM</b>
	1 April	- Commemoration Event Shrewsbury Cemetery
	<b>6 April</b>	- <b>How to Build a Horsa – Assault Glider Trust</b>
	18-19 April	- Area Conference, Warwick
	<b>11 May</b>	- <b>Hostelries in Shrewsbury – Nigel Hinton</b>
	<b>1 June</b>	- <b>Growing up in Manhattan – Mother Peters</b>
	26-28 June	- Association Annual Conference, Blackpool
	<b>6 July</b>	- <b>From Hiroshima to Nagasaki – Mike Bradbury</b>
	<b>3 August</b>	- <b>Aches, Pains and Pills (Working Title) – Dr L Houghton</b>
	<b>7 September</b>	- <b>Memories of East Rothera, Antarctica</b>
	<b>5 October</b>	- <b>An Introduction to Physical Geography – Graham Bradbury</b>
	<b>2 November</b>	- <b>Inside Out. An Account of a Prison Chaplain – Roy Ellis</b>
	<b>7 December</b>	- <b>Christmas Social</b>
2021	<b>4 January</b>	- <b>New Year Meeting</b>

Programme subject to change; however there will always be a talk or event at each meeting.

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

- 9. Social meetings are held at the **Harlescott Social Club, Roseway, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4HW** meetings are held on the first **Monday** of each month commencing at 1230 pm. (If the first Monday is a Bank Holiday, the Branch will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday). One of the principle aims of the Association is comradeship, and we would like to welcome every one of you to our meetings.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- 10. The Membership Secretary writes:

*Shrewsbury and District Branch Membership Numbers:  
Life 59, Ordinary 101, Associate 33, GAYE 173: Total 366*

The membership of our Branch has increased significantly over the last year with over 366 members; made up from: Life, Ordinary, Associate and Give As You Earn (GAYE) members. We are fortunate to be so close to RAF Shawbury that we benefit from Serving Members stationed there, which boosts our membership total. However, our active membership is almost entirely made up from retired members, their spouses and friends. We also have a very welcome, significant number of Associate Members. We are exceptionally grateful for the regular attendance of our RAFA Liaison Officers from RAF Shawbury who keep us in-touch with the news of RAF Shawbury and the wider Service in general.

Please note that, for most of us, our membership fee for 2019 will be due for renewal on 31 December 2019. Paying by Direct Debit automatically renews your membership; alternatively, please pay by sending a cheque directly to HQ RAFA using their pre-addressed envelope; however, if this is not practical, please give your subscription to Paul Martin or Pam Small, our Treasurer, who will forward it to RAFA HQ. The Membership fees from 1 January 2019 are:

Ordinary: £23.00,	Ordinary 4 Year: £86.00,
Associate: £16.00 (Non-Air Mail: £12.00).	Associate 4 Year: £61.50 (Non-Air Mail: £48.00)

We are very pleased that so many of us manage to get to our monthly meetings at the Harlescott Social Club, [17-43 Roselyn, Shrewsbury SY1 4LP](#). We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> (non-holiday) Monday of every month. Our Monday lunch-time meetings are a most enjoyable way of spending time with friends over a light meal and a drink in a warm and pleasant environment. The meetings include a raffle and an interesting talk by a guest speaker. If you have not already joined us there, or have not attended for some time, please do make the effort to come to at least one of the meetings where you are assured a warm welcome. If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings regularly, please remember that your Branch is always here to help so please keep in touch with your RAFA.

We have been very fortunate to have several new members join us in the past few months. However, information about new members has not always been received by your Branch. Please accept our sincere apologies for not contacting you (new members) directly to welcome you to our Branch. Please be assured of a warm welcome at our monthly meetings. Please contact the Membership Secretary, or any member of the Committee, if you have any questions about RAFA or the Branch. Please see the Branch's Website: <http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk>

Paul Martin  
Membership Secretary

## **WINGS APPEAL**

11. The Wings Appeal Organiser writes:

Our longstanding WAO, Alex Madley, stood down this year having been in post since before the time I took over as Chairman. Alex ensured that our Wings Appeal process ran smoothly and complied with the inevitable legislation that seems to cover every aspect of our lives so I am extremely grateful to her for providing me with a comprehensive handover pack.

We tend to find opportunities to collect at local supermarkets and major events. This year we again had a presence at the Shrewsbury Flower Show where we were given a free pitch for the Area Trailer. Unfortunately, it was a bit of a damp weekend but we were able to generate some funds and enlist a couple of new members.

The total raised by the Branch this year was £1893.98 which is down on the previous years when Alex ran the role but a useful amount of money.

We have had a number of new collectors this year and I am very grateful to all who have helped raise these funds. Letters have been written to likely venues requesting collecting opportunities for next year so your continued support will be gratefully received.

Paul Sharp

## **WELFARE**

12. The Welfare Officer writes:

*Our Branch's welfare work has been progressing quietly throughout the year. Your Welfare Officers are responsible for helping all members of the "RAF Family", in the local area who are in need of practical assistance to improve their lives. Please note that your Branch Welfare Officers are permitted to help only those who personally ask for assistance; if you know of anyone from the "RAF Family", who might like assistance, please advise them to contact your Branch Welfare Officers. Please note that being a member of the "RAF Family" does not need an individual to be a member of our Branch or of RAFA.*

*One aspect of your RAFA's welfare work is "Befriending". Befriending encourages people who would like to visit members of the "RAF Family" who may be lonely and in need of social contact; possibly in their home, hospital or nursing home. We are very fortunate in having 3 Befrienders in our area. This means that if we know of a member of the "RAF Family" who may feel isolated and lonely it is up to all of us to take the initiative to take the first steps to re-include them into society. Should you know of anyone from the "RAF Family" who might like assistance, please advise them to contact your Branch Welfare Officers.*

*Paul Martin  
Honorary Welfare Officer*

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

13. ***The Annual general Meeting of the Shrewsbury and District Branch will be held in the Harlescott Social Club on Monday 2 March 2020 commencing at 1230 pm.***

## **NOMINATION FORM FOR BRANCH OFFICERS**

14. Attached to this News Letter is a nomination form for Branch Officers. Branch Officers, who are nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting in March, organise the various events, and manage the assets of the Branch. Your Committee would be pleased to welcome new members to the Committee.

## **CONCLUSION**

15. In conclusion, and on behalf of your Committee, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas, and all the best for the New Year. We do hope that you will find time to attend our monthly meetings during 2020.

In Friendship One to Another

*John Tisbury*

**Keep up to date with your Branch by visiting our website at [www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk](http://www.rafashrewsbury.org.uk)**

Shrewsbury and District Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association is Registered Charity No: 1073201